

The Child of Liberty in Legal Bondage,

OR

The Son and Heir in the Servant's Yoke;

A SERMON,

PREACHED AT MONKWELL-STREET MEETING,

SEPTEMBER 9, 1794.

By *WILLIAM HUNTINGTON, S. S.*

MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL

AT PROVIDENCE CHAPEL, LITTLE TITCHFIELD-STREET.

I am shut up, I cannot come forth.

PSALM lxxxviii. 8.

Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke.

JER. xxxi. 18.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY T. BENSLEY.

Sold at Providence Chapel on Monday and Wednesday Evenings, and at Monkwell-Street Meeting on Tuesday Evenings; by W. Baynes, No. 50, Paternoster-Row; Elvey and Green, No. 93, and J. Baker, No. 226, Oxford-Street; J. Cobbin, No. 14, Hertford-Street, Fitzroy-Square; and by A. Batten, sen. Wellwyn, Herts.

1797.



TO MR. HUNTINGTON.

London, Sept. 10, 1794.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

As I understand you are frequently troubled, and put to unnecessary expense, with impertinent and unedifying letters, I humbly beg excuse for troubling you again at this time, hoping you will not have reason at least to complain of the impertinence of this letter, however much of its ignorance, and none at all of its expense. I had the happiness last night, as in the good providence of God I have often had before, to hear you at Monkwell-street Chapel on the text "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free," &c. with much satisfaction, and I hope, by the blessing of God, with some edification. I think, if, after such a sermon, and the doctrines contained in and enforced by it, your adversaries continue to insist upon the danger of your doctrines, and the error of your judgment as a Minister of the Gospel, they must form an hypothesis by malice and prejudice, and use the arguments from falsehood and slander. There is no doubt but that, if a man be made an offender for a word, or his own natural mode of expression, who among men (who are all,

at the best but imperfect), who among them shall escape judgment and condemnation? only, however, as it is happy for them, by their own brethren, fallible as themselves, and accountable to the judgment, and liable to the condemnation, without repentance, of him who is only impartial and just. According to my weak judgment, you fully settled the dispute with your adversaries respecting Antinomianism, and removed the smallest doubt (to any one) of the orthodoxy of your principles respecting the believer's freedom from the law as a covenant of works, and of subjection to it as a rule of obedience for life, or as a rule of obedience at all, only as a transcript of the moral perfections of God, and perfect standard of righteousness; which is wrought out by Jesus Christ for all whom the Father has given him, and applied to them through the faith of the operation of his Spirit, which works by love; and, as it is perfect and pure, and abounds to God and man, is a fulfilling of the law. Your correspondent, whom you mentioned last night, appears to me to be just such a man in principle as your adversaries mistake you for. According to what you mentioned of him, as appears to me, he is an Antinomian in the proper sense of the word. When he is once freed from the sensible bondage of the law, he seems to flatter himself he has nothing to fear from its power (as to bondage) for ever again. But I am afraid he soon will, as usual, if we aright know ourselves, and the law, and its author, and at the same time examine our own dispositions

dispositions and practice for one week, much more a month or year, that we shall be condemned by ourselves, and shut up; that we can obtain no relief, but by the same power that loosed the bonds of our spiritual death. But I need not, Sir, mention these things to you, neither do I on any other account but to express my own mind to you as a friend, not as attempting in any respect to instruct one at whose feet I am happy to learn. I could not help last night observing the wisdom and truth of God in making all things work for good to them that love him, when I had the happiness to hear such a sermon, occasioned (as I suppose) chiefly by the incident of your correspondent's letter; and is to me a further proof of the utility of argument, and even in some degree of controversy, in the discovery and defence of the truth.—I humbly think, Sir, after preparing such a sermon, and not only so, but in immediate answer to such objections, and in defence of such doctrines; which I believe you yourself are supposed by many to condemn; it would be both doing injustice to yourself, and withholding from the public a valuable means of instruction, if you do not publish it. About six weeks ago, when you preached at Monkwell-street the sermon on the abolition of the authority of the law over believers in Christ, I was (I must confess) so much taken with it, that I would have almost given any thing for a copy of it; but did not think it was possible you could have time, and take the trouble, to write out at length such a copious dis-

course before delivery; and, if even you had attempted it afterwards, you could not have come any thing at all near the sentiments, not to say precise words; but, when (to my great satisfaction) I found it published almost word for word as it was delivered from the pulpit, I must say I was much surprised, and could not help admiring both the natural and gracious qualifications of the author. By the publication of that sermon I believe, Sir, you have at once defended your own cause and that of truth; while you have favoured the public at large, and those who heard it in particular, with an instructive and edifying discourse on the subject. I, among others, was minded to solicit the publication of it, and would actually have taken the liberty, if it had not been for the reasons above mentioned—that I did not think you could either have written it before, or could remember it with any degree of precision afterwards.—However, I do not think this preached last night any thing inferior to it; and on this account, Sir, I would earnestly beg of you, that, as you regard the vindication of your character, and your success as a minister of the gospel of Christ in the conversion of sinners, and the edification of saints, either immediately, in your own connexion, or more at large, you will favour them with the publication of it.

I am, Sir,

Your's, with due esteem,

N. F.—H.

TO MR. HUNTINGTON.

SIR,

I DESIRE to return my sincere thanks to Almighty God for hearing and answering my request, in sending you forth this morning to describe the very feelings of my poor soul; for I did not know it was got under bondage to the law; I thought I was an hypocrite, and I desired the Lord to send you to shew me if I was; and, if not, that you might bring forth some saint that had been in my state; which the Lord has condescended to do. The Lord grant me a grateful heart for his great mercies. Dear Sir, pray for me, that the Lord may bring my soul out of this prison, that I may praise his holy name; and may the Lord give you a double portion of his Spirit.

From your sincere daughter,

E. T.

Sept. 14, 1794.

P R E F A C E.

COURTEOUS READER,

THERE are but few of God's children, however dark, weak, or rickety, but what understand something of Satan's violent assaults, blasphemous attacks, cruel accusations, and fiery darts: but, in his transformation into the likeness, character, and office, of an angel of light, he is not so easily perceived, I mean *when he goes of his own accord out of a man*, and, as an enemy, a vexer, and an accuser, *leaves the house empty, swept, and garnished*: when he comes also to move the passions of a way-side hearer by an eloquent orator, in order to draw out the bowels of natural affections to the carnal and hypocritical, and to excite enmity to the sovereignty of God, to the ministers of the Spirit, and to mount Zion; when he comes to furnish the head, and illuminate the mind, of a Judas, and make his light darkness; to enforce the law as a rule of life, in order to bring into bondage, to rebuke sin in pious Mary, and enforce liberality from the price of her ointment; to reform outward conduct by a blind zeal, and varnish a sepulchre, or cover with turf an old grave that appears not; when he
sets

sets Jannes and Jambres to withstand the miracles of Moses, and the disciples of Moses to confront Paul; when he enforces the law of God in order to frustrate his grace; when he speaks great swelling words of vanity, to allure through the lust of the flesh; and promises liberty, in order to lead sinners into the bonds of corruption; *when he preaches Christ out of envy, to add afflictions to an apostle's bonds*; when he enforces enlargement of heart, to expel *the offence of the cross*; when he creeps into houses with the shew of truth, to lead captive silly women, in the bonds of iniquity.—All these branches of Satan's policy and priestcraft are not so well understood by every believer as I could wish they were.

And, as for the spirit of the law—its influence and effects, the bondage that it genders, the wrath that it works, the cold chill that it communicates, the barrenness that attends it, the motions of sin by it, the legal strivings of a believer under it, and the miserable success that attends his labour—all this is less understood in our day than the policy of Satan.

I have treated lately a little upon this subject, having experienced much of it myself; and in so doing have greatly displeased some, who never were pleased with any thing but themselves.

And, that I may separate the vile from the precious, and shew the difference between a believer in bondage
and

and an infidel in freedom ; the shame, nakedness, and emptiness, of the hypocrite ; that every tried saint may stir up himself against him ; and that I may yet starve the goats, and feed the sheep ; plague the fool, and profit the wise ; that carnal critics may display their wisdom in writing against it, and I have an opportunity of exposing their foolishness for attempting it ; are the only reasons of its appearing in print.

I have interwoven this Discourse with part of another preached at Providence Chapel on Sunday morning, September 14 ; hoping God will bless both the warp and woof, while I remain, in the bonds of the gospel, ever thine

WM. HUNTINGTON.

Paddington,
Sept. 15, 1794.

A SERMON.

A
S E R M O N.

STAND FAST THEREFORE IN THE LIBERTY WHERE-
WITH CHRIST HATH MADE US FREE, AND BE NOT
ENTANGLED AGAIN WITH THE YOKE OF BONDAGE.

GAL. V. I.

WHEN the apostle came first into the regions of Galatia, he and his message were most cordially received. His personal deformity, which he calls *the temptation in his flesh*, they despised not, but received him as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. The weight and power of the message counterbalanced all the unsightliness of the messenger. The joyful tidings that he brought so excited their gratitude, that *they would have pulled out their own eyes, and given them to Paul*.—But love soonest hot is soonest cold.

Paul withdraws from these regions, to lengthen the cords of Zion, and to spread the curtains of her habitations a little farther; with an intent, in due time, to return and strengthen her stakes, which
he

he had left in Galatia. But, as the enemy often sows tares while men sleep, so he often attempts the debauch of a wife when the good man is not at home. Paul, the servant of Christ, withdraws; and Satan, transformed in his ministers, succeeds him. Righteousness and perfection by the law are enforced by these seedsmen of Satan, and cordially received by the simple in Galatia. Their hearts at this time were warmed with the love of God, and warm to God; and whatever God requires they were willing to perform; then they *must be circumcised, and keep the law of Moses*. This was produced, and proved from holy writ; and to this they gave heed: and, as they advanced nothing but what was in the bible, they took it for granted it must be right; and it was no more than reasonable that, as God was so good to them, they should do all they could to please him, and make him all the amends, and give him all the satisfaction, they could for his numerous favours to them: and, seeing the doctrine was scriptural, and enforced by Israelites, if not priests, who were warm zealous men, they were all zealously affected to them, and their necks were soon inclined to bow to the legal yoke.

These men were ministers of Satan. Satan had before tried to blind the eyes of these Galatians, as he does all others; that the light of the gospel should not shine unto them; but all in vain, for the light of the gospel had shined into the hearts of these Galatians. Hence it was needful that Satan should adopt another

another method, more likely to succeed, being less suspected; and that was by bringing them under the old vail of the law, under which the gospel is hid. Satan's gloomy shade had not been sufficient to keep the rays of the gospel out, therefore by these priests of his he would lead them to the blackness of Sinai again, and to the frowns of God in a broken law; where the light of his countenance is hid, where God in the face of Jesus never shines, and where he would appear in thick darkness to them. Paul hears of this, and opposes them; charges these ministers with *witchcraft*, and the Galatians with *foolishness* for adhering to them; telling them that they were not well affected; that these men would exclude them from Christ, that they might affect them. However their zeal is fired for works, and for perfecting the good work begun. Paul tells them that nothing but fleshly perfection is to be had in the law; and that, if they went to the law for perfection, they must go there for righteousness also—for Christ will be *all in all*, or nothing at all; that, *if they were circumcised, Christ should profit them nothing*, for he will communicate no grace by the law.

However, *the law doth not exclude boasting*, nor humble the proud heart. The legal leaven had begun to ferment; they were puffed up, and not to be taught by such as Paul, whom they viewed as their enemy for attempting to hinder this good work. Paul tells them that, if he was their enemy, it was for telling the truth; and passes a double curse upon

upon that man, or angel, that should preach any other gospel than that which he had preached. He tells them that this persuasion came not from him that called them; that a little of that legal leaven would leaven the whole lump; and that they had been called to liberty; but that their liberty was not to be used as an occasion to the flesh, either in seeking fleshly perfection by the works of the law, which is a ground of pride and boasting, or in gratifying the evil desires of the flesh by using liberty as a cloak.

Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

In handling these words, I will treat,

1. Of bondage.
2. Of liberty.
3. Of the fruits of liberty.
4. Of this yoke of bondage.—And
5. That it is possible for a believer in Christ to be entangled with it a second time.

I have no call to say much to the children of God about our natural bondage, for they have all felt it. We are all of us by nature in bondage to sin. Every besetting sin, while in a state of nature, lords it over us; and, whether willing or unwilling, we are slaves and drudges to it.—*He that committeth sin*

is the servant of sin. And none, but God who kept Abimelek from touching Sarah, and Jabez from the grief of evil, can ever deliver us from this tyrant.

We are in bondage under the guilt that we have contracted by sin; which, with shame and confusion, like a chain, binds the soul over to punishment.—*He bringeth out those that are bound with chains, but the rebellious dwell in a dry land.*

We are in bondage to the king of terrors.—The guilty sinner dreads death because of a future reckoning; he does not care to come to books, to take his trial, or to come to judgment; he knows that death leads to all these, and, therefore, *through the fear of death, he is subject to bondage.*

He is in bondage to Satan; he rules in the hearts of the children of disobedience; he has possession of them, and takes them captive at his will.—And none can deliver from this strong man armed but he that came to destroy the works of the devil.

We are in bondage to the precepts of the moral law; bound to perform perfect obedience to it, under pain of double death: and, knowing that we are sinners, the spirit of legal bondage to fear holds us fast bound to the dread of death, hell, and damnation; and in this state we are *shut up under the law until faith comes.* Thus we are prisoners for infinite debts; sin is our strong hold, wrath our dreadful
B meditation;

meditation ; Satan our accuser and jailer ; and justice will never, *but by the blood of the covenant, send one prisoner out of the pit.* Zech. ix. 11.

2dly, But God has ordained a release, and proclaimed it ; the jubilee trump is sounded ; and a surety for debtors is provided. Faith is bestowed by a gracious God, and by the Spirit it is wrought in the soul. Faith eyes the surety and the satisfaction, and sweetly applies the atonement. Release from guilt, and enlargement from the dismal cell and dark regions, are the blessed effects of it ; while a feeling sense of God's eternal love in Christ, shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost, removes all the awful apprehensions of vindictive wrath, casts out fear and torment, and leads and attracts the affections even to the right hand of God himself, where Christ sitteth ; which is the soul's freedom of access to God. The conscience is freed from her guilt, the mind is freed from her fear, the heart freed from its native hardness, our thoughts are in harmony, and sweetly satisfied with a Redeemer's fulness, and the tongue is loosed to celebrate the high praises of God ; the yoke of a Redeemer becomes easy, *his service perfect freedom, his ways pleasantness, and all his paths peace.* The root of this glorious matter, the spring of this blessed felicity, is the everlasting love of God the Father, the dying love of the Lord Jesus, and the sweet operations of the Spirit of love felt and enjoyed in the soul.
—Which leads me

3dly,

3dly, To consider the fruits of this liberty, which, in a *free-born citizen, in a son of the free-woman*, are conspicuous enough. Such an one cannot fend away a distressed neighbour, saying, "Come again to morrow, and I will give thee," when he has plenty by him. The love of God casts out the love of money, the love of the world, and the friendship of it.—But *be that sees a brother in need, and shuts up his bowels against him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?* Not as it did in Zaccheus, when salvation came to his house.

This liberty never leads men to countenance or vindicate the propagators of error, nor to undermine the reputation and labours of the faithful. Paul tells the Galatians that this persuasion came not from him that called them—they were bewitched into this. *In the eyes of a true-born citizen of Zion a vile person is contemned, but he honours them that fear the Lord.*

A person in liberty must be at a certainty about his state; and be sound, settled, and at a point, in the great and fundamental doctrines of the gospel. If his thoughts are not in harmony here, he cannot *make straight paths for his feet; there is no judgment in his goings; he stumbles at the word*, and is far enough from having *his feet in a large room*.

The liberty that springs from divine love does not lead men to pride, to lord it over the sheep, much less over the under shepherds.—*Charity vaunteth not itself; is not puffed up; nor becometh itself unseemly.* Nor does it lead to licentiousness, nor yet to

presumption, much less to be *wise above what is written*, and to cavil at what they cannot disprove. For unhumbled men, unbroken spirits, unexperienced, and unsavory souls, to talk of liberty, is like a whore with a brazen brow contending for modesty.

The liberty of a saint is guarded with a filial fear; which has God's goodness in Christ for its object, keeps the soul from using liberty as a cloak of maliciousness, and from abusing it as an occasion to the flesh.

Liberty, that springs from the *oil of joy*, will *make a man's face to shine*. If the *saving health of all nations is made known* to the sinner, God will be *the health of his countenance*. A fallen countenance, which is the common index of a guilty conscience, ill becomes an advocate for gospel liberty. Unexperienced and self-condemned men should never sound the jubilee trump of the gospel. Their sound is uncertain, and they themselves are living contradictions. I come now

4thly, To the yoke. Yearly servitude is sometimes in scripture called a yoke. *Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their masters worthy of all honour*. The servant is under the master. The master's will is the servant's rule. He works by the command of his master, and expects his hire for his labour; and to this the allusion is in my text. The Galatians were not servants, but sons, and therefore should not take this yoke on their necks. This yoke is the moral law, that the judaizing teachers had carried

ried to Antioch ; which was, *ye must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses*. At Antioch Paul and Barnabas withstood them ; the apostles, who had the keys of the kingdom, to bind and loose, at their synod at Jerusalem condemned them ; the release sent to Antioch exposed them to contempt there ; and the disciples of that city receiving their liberty with much joy and consolation. Antioch grew too hot for these ministers of Satan ; therefore their master sent them into the regions of Galatia, where perhaps the apostle's decision was not yet known ; and here they laboured hard with the old text, *except ye be circumcised, and keep the law of Moses, ye cannot be saved*. The apostle Paul acquaints them with the affair at Jerusalem ; of the intention of the false brethren, who came in to spy out their liberty and bring them into bondage ; and of their not giving place to them for a moment, that the truth of the gospel might continue with them ; but he becomes their enemy for telling the truth. They are for circumcision, and for keeping the law ; the former is to bring them in debtors to the latter. These things were found in the scriptures, and appeared right to these simple souls ; and the devil's drift in it was to bring them under the ministration of the letter, and to set aside the satisfaction of Christ. And, in order to make an outward shew, and blind their eyes, he led them to the old Jewish sabbath, and to other days and months and times and years. And they thought that circumcision and the moral law, and adhering to these things

would make them perfect. But Paul knew that perfection, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, were all in Christ; and that those who went to the law would neither enjoy Christ, nor any of these things in him; for he is king at Zion, not at Sinai; and all his springs, rivers, and streams, are in the city, not in the wilderness; it is the *rebellious*, not the obedient, *that dwell in a dry land*. This is the yoke in which they wanted to entangle them, that they might leave the liberty of *sons*, and be influenced with the bondage of *servants*; that God might be viewed as a *master*, not as a *father*; that they might *work for God*, and not *God work in them*; that *the reward might be reckoned to them of debt, not of grace*; that they might be *excluded from Christ the advocate*, and go to the *accusations of Moses*; reject the *surety*, and work at their own *debt-book*. This is the devil's *witchcraft*, and this is the Galatians' *foolishness*; and, because this branch of priestcraft required much infernal wisdom and policy to entangle these Galatians in this yoke, it is called *witchcraft*.

The word *entangled* seems to be an allusion to fish entangled by an hook or net, to a bird entangled in a snare, or to a sheep or deer entangled in a bush; into which they are all brought unawares. And, as believers are compared to fish, to fowls, to sheep, and to harts with horns, Satan employs various artists against *the household of faith*, in order to ensnare them; some of which are compared to fowlers, others to fishers, who *sacrifice to their own net and burn incense to their*

their own drag. And legal preachers, who handle the law unlawfully, make the Jewish altars and the two tables of stone which is intended for our welfare a trap, and a stumbling block, to the people. And such entanglers are in their sins, and under the curse; and, while they entangle the sheep of Christ, themselves are nothing but *thorns and briars, who are nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned.* This Paul knew; and declares that they should bear their own judgment, whoever they were, being accursed of God; and he wished them cut off that troubled them; pronouncing a curse upon all, either angels or men, that should preach any other gospel than that which he had preached. Which leads me

5thly, To treat of the possibility of a believer's being entangled again with the yoke of legal bondage. This is a point that will not easily go down with many professors in our days. Men, who have been healed without being wounded; saved before they were lost; and justified by grace before they were condemned by the law; who have made their *calling and election sure*, without *crying day and night unto God*; who *understand all mysteries*, but are destitute of charity; whose faith stands in the word of the gospel, but not in the power thereof; who have escaped the task of self-denial, and shunned the perilous path of tribulation; who *have no changes* in their life, nor *bands in their death*; whose own will is their rule, and whose self-sufficiency is their god, and the object of their adoration; who know every thing but their own ignorance, and all men but them-

selves; who have never been *chastened every day*, nor *plagued every morning*; who have defeated Satan without receiving one fiery dart, and overcome the world without one war with it, or frown from it; who are got into the *large room*, and into the *wealthy place*, without coming either *through fire* or *through water*; who are purified without either *the fiery trial*, or *the furnace of affliction*:—these have not only overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil; but they can *defy the armies of the living God*, without being able to describe one part of the experience or sufferings of a Christian soldier, or one piece of the saints' heavenly panoply. They have defied both death and the devil, without ever *resisting unto blood*, or *striving against sin*. The war of these men is not with Satan, but with Christ; not with the enemies of God, but with the ministers of Jesus; not with the worldlings, but with the saints. These are not the weak who are to say they are strong; these do not wait upon God to renew their strength, but to gainsay the mouth and wisdom that God has promised to give to his servants. God's strength is not expected to be made perfect in the weakness of these—their strength is firm: such a champion is as Solomon's lion, the strongest among beasts, who trusts in his paws, and turns not away for any. He is the *be-goat that is comely in his going*, whose trust is in his horns; the *greyhound*, who confides in his heels; and *the king against whom there is no rising up*; having never been engaged in the fight of faith.

Some

Some tell us that a believer cannot be entangled again with the yoke of bondage.—They cannot allow that the north wind can awake, and the south wind (which are quite opposite to each other) blow upon one and the same garden. They think it is impossible for a disciple of Jesus to be puffed up and soured with *the leaven of the pharisees*; and that the Lord's kind caution to them to take heed and beware of their doctrines of free-will, self-righteousness, and legal bondage, was altogether useless and impertinent. But surely the Lord says nothing in vain. And, if the Galatians were in no danger of this leaven, Paul must *be in great fear where no fear was*. But Paul knew what this bondage is, and could see that the greatest part of the Galatians were infected with it; he therefore tells them *a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump*.

Others, who are *wiser in their own conceit than seven men that can render a reason*, tell us that these Galatians were never converted at all, and therefore they might be entangled *again* with this yoke. If they had never been delivered from it previous to this re-entanglement, Paul's speech must be tinged with either flattery or falsehood when he tells them that Christ had made them free, and cautions them to stand fast in the liberty which they never had.

But these children and old women, who are our teachers and rulers, tell us that "Paul stood in doubt of these Galatians." And he had cause enough for it,

it, seeing the whole lump was fermented with this leaven. He might justly doubt whether they would not submit to circumcision, especially as their minds were so prejudiced against him as to count him their enemy for telling them the truth. Paul knew that, if they went to the law, their eyes and their dependence would soon be taken from the fulness of Christ; that they would thereby fall from grace; and that Christ would not leave mount Zion, and meet them at Sinai, to communicate his grace to them there; therefore tells them that Christ shall profit them nothing. Moreover, Paul knew that, if the Saviour's easy yoke was slighted, God would soon handle the fair neck of these Galatians, as he did the neck of Ephraim, and bring a heavier yoke upon them. They that are not satisfied with Christ, in whom God is well pleased, shall feel *his sore displeasure* from another quarter; and they that turn from *him that speaks from heaven* shall hear another voice *that once shook the earth*. God will not have Christ, the darling of his soul, slighted; he has not only a purging furnace for a fruitful branch in Christ, but he keeps a yoke for the heifer's neck, *a rod for the fool's back*, and he has his stocks for the feet of those that pervert their way. If his children abuse, slight, or misuse their glorious liberty, he will bow their necks, scourge their backs, and lay them by the heels, till they know the worth of their liberty, how to use it, and how to prize it; as others have done, who with the
most

most piteous moan have cried out, *Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name; restore unto me the joys of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit.*

That believers are often influenced with a spirit of legal bondage, is what I never yet heard any believer, of long standing in the church, deny, till the devil set up a *prating fool*, called Mr. HECTOR.— Though he himself once, if report be true, felt such an horrible sensation, for a few minutes, as quite surprised him; and he may call it *Gad*, for *behold a troop cometh!*

Doctor WATTS seems to understand something of this *spirit of bondage again to fear*, when he says,

“ His name forbids my *slavish fear*,
His grace removes my sins.”

And Mr. HART was not ignorant of it.—

“ If thou, celestial dove, thine influence withdraw,
What easy victims soon we fall to *conscience, wrath, and law!*”

Mr. BUNYAN's treatise upon the two covenants was chiefly intended to remove the spirit of legal bondage, though he himself was not a little influenced by it when he wrote that book, nor is he clear in it. And I know that a spirit of antinomianism on the one hand, and legal bondage on the other, have been communicated to weak believers by reading that very book which is wrote against it.

I come now to treat of this spirit of bondage, and

the workings of it; and, when I have so done, shall appeal to the experience of all real believers; and I verily think that, where the redoubtable Mr. HECTOR has one believer's voice against it, I shall have an hundred for it, because I know that God's saints are in the path of tribulation, where HECTOR never was. In discoursing on the operations of this spirit of bondage, I shall

1. Treat of the darkness that attends it.
2. Of servile or slavish fear.
3. Of narrowness and contraction.
4. Of wrath and sensible anger.
5. Of suspicion and cruel jealousy.
6. Of rebellion and discontent.
7. Of despondency and desperation.
8. Of sensible dryness and barrenness.
9. Of backwardness and reluctance to all good.
10. Of legal striving against sin and corruption. And
11. Of the miserable success of such labour.

First, of darkness.

There is a darkness upon all mankind that may be felt, which man by sin has brought upon himself.—*Darkness hath covered the earth, and gross darkness the people.* Under this dismal gloom Satan carries on his cursed works, and supports his infernal kingdom in the hearts of the children of men.—*He rules in the hearts of the disobedient.* And mankind, being habituated to this darkness, and loving the works of it, hate the light, and will not come to it, because it discovers

discovers and brings to light their evil deeds; flashes convictions of sin, and gives cutting reproofs and rebukes for it.—*All things that are reprov'd are made manifest by the light which doth appear, for whatsoever doth make manifest is light.* Hence it is that *men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.* And Satan, the enemy both of God and man, labours hard to *blind the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them, and they should be saved.* Hence all mankind are blinded by sin, and utterly in the dark about the things that make for their peace. There is a *covering* spread over the heart, mind, and understanding, of all mankind, and a *vail* upon all nations; which *vail* is one of the dreadful effects of Adam's fall, and which he himself soon felt after his dreadful apostasy. It is plain that a glorious light of knowledge was upon him in his primeval innocence; which appears by his knowledge of things, by the suitable names that he gave them, and by the knowledge he had of Eve, of her origin, and by the name that he gave her, and the reason he assigned for it. *But this figure of him that was to come; this man thus made upright, sought out many inventions; this man in honour abideth not; he sinned; and his light and knowledge of God, and of good, left him; and a sad knowledge of evil found him.* The vail of ignorance soon gathered upon him, insomuch that he thought he could hide his sin in his *bosom* (Job xxxi. 33), and his shame from
 God

God by a *leaf*, and himself from his approaching Judge by getting behind a tree. This vail hides the soul from God; and God's just displeasure at sin has hid his blessed face from man. There is—and Adam felt it—a dreadful lour, a dark, an awful, a dismal cloud of just displeasure and holy indignation to be found and felt in the broken law; *it worketh wrath* still. Just judgment, which came upon all men to condemnation; death, that reigned from Adam to Moses; Adam's expulsion from Eden; the flaming sword; his labour and toil in the sweat of his brow; the curse that fell upon the earth for man's sin, and the dismal effects of it; the sufferings threatened to child-bearing women; the sad calamities that befel Adam's family by Cain; are all sad proofs of the just displeasure and wrath of God at sin, *who hides his face, and who can behold him*. And this God let Israel know when he came to revive, to promulge, and to set before them, this covenant or law that Adam, and all in him, had violated and broken.—*He made darkness his secret pavilion*, and not without a cause, nor yet without a meaning; and of this he informed Moses, who was a believer, who had found grace in his sight, and stood high in his favour, and was faithful before him; to whom he had appeared, and with whom he had used the most unparalleled familiarity; and to whom he had never paid such a visit, in such terrible majesty, before.—He therefore prepares him for it, by informing him of it, that he might not be discouraged at it, nor sink under it.—*And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come*

I come unto thee in a thick cloud. Exod. xix. 9. *And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was.* Exod. xx. 21. This dark cloud was to represent God's dreadful wrath at sin, and to let sinners know that he had hid his face from man on that account. The *thunder*, the *lightning*, the *sound of the trumpet*, the *fire*, the *smoke*, the *trembling of the mount*, and the worse *trembling of the camp*, the *death and destruction that was threatened to man or beast that should touch the mount*, were all so many indications of the wrath of God at the sins of men. No way is open here to the blessed face of God, but by the glory of Moses's face, and the light of God's countenance, promised at the mercy seat; both which point out the better Mediator, and the better throne of grace, Christ Jesus. Hence we need not wonder why the Saviour, when his disciples intreated him, saying, *Shew us the father, and it sufficeth us*, gave them this answer, *Have I been so long with you, and hast thou not seen me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.* God, as a *Father*, can never be seen in this world out of Christ. In the law he is not a *Father*, but a *Master*; a terrible Lawgiver, a just Judge, a sin-avenging God, a *consuming fire*; and it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God in a broken law. In Christ he is *well pleased*, in Christ he has *reconciled the world unto himself*; and in the face of Christ he will ever shine, *who is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.*

But

But the law, when reflected on the mind of man, is *blackness and darkness*; and the spirit of it is vindictive vengeance, and nothing else, which genders to bondage, and works wrath, fear, torment, jealousy, death, and eternal damnation. And, that we may know the difference of the one covenant from the other, the preciousness of the glorious gospel, and the invaluable worth of that *life and immortality brought to light* by it; that we may see and feel the need of Christ, and know how to prize him; that we may know the sad state of them that are out of him, and the blessed state of those that are in him; and be grateful to God for that free, sovereign, and discriminating, grace that has made us to differ—we are often exercised with the darkness of this mount, and it is a *darkness that may be felt*; and those professors that deny this are in a worse darkness—for Satan keeps them ignorant of themselves, of God, of Christ, and of the law; from which ignorance the light of the gospel has delivered every real believer; and God is the everlasting light of him, and his *sun shall no more go down*. But it is not said that his sun shall never be *eclipsed*.

Abraham, the father of the faithful, must feel a little of this *darkness*, and of the *horrors* of it.—*And when the sun was going down a deep sleep fell upon Abraham; and lo an horror of great darkness fell upon him; and, when it was dark, a smoking furnace and a burning lamp passed between those pieces. In that same day the Lord made a covenant with Abraham. Gen. xv.* The beasts, which were here slain and divided
by

by Abraham, were to lead Abraham's faith to the death of Christ, and to the covenant, which was to be *a covenant by sacrifice*; as the offering up of Isaac did afterward; which shewed Abraham that the covenant was not to be confirmed by a brutal sacrifice, but by a sacrifice of human nature. This *great darkness, horror, and smoking furnace*, which went before *the burning lamp*, represented not only the affliction of the children of Abraham in Egypt, and their deliverance from that; but the wrath of God in a broken law, and salvation from it by Jesus Christ, as the prophet Isaiah applies it. Read Isai. lxii. 1.

The children of light have been often exercised under this dark cloud, or horror of great darkness. Hence Job—*He hath fenced up my way that I cannot pass, and he set darkness in my paths.* Job xix. 8. *The Almighty troubleth me, because I was not cut off before the darkness, neither hath he covered the darkness from my face.* And Jeremiah—I *am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath; he hath led me, and brought me into darkness, but not into light. Lord, why castest thou off my soul? why hidest thou thy face from me?* Psalm lxxxviii. 6, 14. *We wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness; we grope for the wall like the blind, we grope as if we had no eyes.* Numerous are the complaints of good men under this dark cloud; and to a child of light it is indeed *a darkness that may be felt*; it beclouds and bewilders the mind; the brightest evidences are in a great measure hid; the bible itself is

sealed, and fast closed; *we see not our signs, nor our tokens for good*; every good thing is at a distance from us, behind the cloud, and we cannot get at it; there is a dismal gloom upon our path; we know not where we are, where to step, nor which way to steer; which way God is gone we know not, but he knoweth the way that we take; and such a prayer as this suits us well—*Seek thy servant*, for we are lost; Christ is hid, and there is a frowning cloud upon the sweet countenance of God, in which he hides his blessed face; or, as he did to the disciples, holds our eyes, that we should not see him. But, though this is often the case with believers, and they cannot see their path straight behind them, nor one beam of light before them; though all evidences are hid, and the light of the Lord's countenance is withdrawn; though no signs, nor love-tokens appear; and though the life-giving commandment is hid from us, and he shews us no wonders out of his law; yet these Israelites have *light in their dwellings*.—They have light to see the corruptions of their own hearts; to see the workings of unbelief, legal pride, enmity, rebellion, the double diligence of Satan, and the wretched advantages he takes of them in these dark seasons. Job looked *backward* to past experience, but all was dark; and *forward* to future hope, but he could not see it. He looked on the right hand and on the left; but length of days, riches and honours, were all gone. He saw neither his advocate on the right hand, nor providence on the left. His corruptions,

his

his accuser, his loss, and his misery, were the chief things that appeared in view. There is a remembrance of what he has done, and but little more; and there is a hope in him, and an expectation of the fulfilment of what he has promised to do: but Job complained that his hope was removed like a tree; and Jeremiah said that his hope was perished from the Lord. To be favoured, in this *cloudy and dark day*, but for one minute with faith in exercise, just enough to banter the enemy, and predict a future sun-rising, is a blessing indeed.—*Rejoice not against me, O my enemy. If I fall, I shall arise: if I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me, and he shall bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness.* Hence it appears plain that this cloud of darkness on the face of the Almighty, by which he hides himself from us, is his displeasure at sin.—*My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends.* Job xlii. 7. Which displeasure, or wrath, is not revealed to us in Christ (for there it is done away) but in the law.—*For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him; I hid me, and was wroth; I have seen his ways, and will heal him, and will restore comforts unto him.* Isai. lvii. 17, 18. This healing and restoration of comfort is promised to them that fear God, and is effected by a fresh believing view of Christ.—*Unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his beams.* Mal. iv. 2. This sun is Christ, and God the Father shining in his face restores comfort. The light dispels the cloud of dis-

pleasure, in which God says, *I bid me*, and the comfortable healing of these beams heals the stroke that a sense of wrath has given to the soul.—*I smote him, and was wroth; I have seen his ways, and will heal him.* Therefore, while this cloud remains, let him that is under it turn his thoughts to the *name of Jesus* if he has nothing else left.—*He that walketh in darkness, and hath no light, let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God.* I come now to treat

2. Of the *fear* that attends this spirit of bondage. By which I do not mean *filial fear*; for that is a grace of the Holy Spirit, planted in the heart by him, and has the goodness of God in Christ for its object. This fear is a reverential awe of a good and gracious God, that presents us under his watchful eye, and him always before our eyes. This fear is a little *sentinel*, one of the post army of grace. Song vi. 13. For the church is *a company of two armies*, grace and corruption, which war against each other. This fear is to keep us from departing from God, in which we are counselled to walk—*My son, be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.*

When any danger appears; when any error is advanced and presented to us by Satan or his hawkers; or when any trap is set by enemies, intended to be a future handle of reproach; or any temptations to sin; this little *watchman*, called *fear*, is upon his tower. He sounds the alarm, awakens the little camp, and will not let us proceed without well weighing matters.

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ters. The understanding must be consulted, a proper judgment must be made of the case, a divine warrant must be obtained, the sentence of our judgment must be known, and the approbation of God and conscience must be had, or this little *soldier* will withstand us; so that we cannot proceed, unless violence be offered to this *diligent looker out*, which attends us in all company, and keeps us upon our guard, so as to cut off the future occasion of enemies, and to forestall the devil's market. But, if this grace be opposed by any violent measures, hardness of heart is sure to follow, and then we may pray as others have done, *Why hast thou hardened our hearts from thy fear?* Isai. lxiii. 17.

But this is not the fear that I am to treat of, nor yet the *carnal fear of man*, which is a sin of the human heart, and has the power and wrath of man for its object; which, when it awes a believer in his profession of Christ, is evil, and bringeth a snare.—*Fear not them which can kill the body*. Slavish fear is a principal ingredient in the *spirit of bondage*; which spirit of bondage is the *wrath of God*, and nothing else; and has the terrors of God, and his terrible majesty, for its object. And this fear works in the consciences of guilty sinners; in the fresh contracted guilt of real believers; and at times, without guilt, through the old man of sin, which works in all our members. This spirit of the law stirs up sin, and threatens us for it; and sin takes occasion by the law and fights against that. The one is *God's anger against man's sin*, (Zeph. ii. 3) and the other is *man's enmity against God*. Rom. viii. 7.

This slavish fear, whenever it falls upon a believer, awakens all his intellectual powers with an alarm of fright, as if something dreadful was coming on, some strange thing happening unto him, or some awful judgment or calamity going to befall him.—*The thing which I greatly feared is come upon me, and that which I was afraid of is come unto me.* Job iii. 25. *My heart is pained within me, and the terrors of death are fallen upon me; fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me; and I said, O that I had wings like a dove!* Psalm lv. 4, 5. *My heart panted, saith the prophet; fearfulness affrighted me; the night of my pleasure hath be turned into fear unto me.* Isai. xxi. 4. *Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake.* Job iv. 14. *Let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias; for he wist not what to say, for they were sore afraid.* Mark ix. 6. But there came a voice to them, saying, *This is my beloved Son, hear him.* By which voice the disciples were shewn which was the only way to get from this dreadful fear of the law.

Under the operations of this *spirit of bondage to fear*, God is not viewed as shining in the face of Jesus Christ. The new covenant characters of God—such as our God in covenant love, our Father in Christ, the portion of our souls, a present help, and a reconciled friend; which make him sweet and lovely to us—are quite out of sight, and nothing but terrible majesty is seen or felt. Moses, though he was a choice believer

believer in Christ before he left Egypt, (Heb. xi. 24) was seized with this panic at the bush—*And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.* Exod. iii. 6. And David could not go to inquire of God, for he was afraid. 1 Chron. xxi. 30.

While this slavish fear works, the believer is confused, terrified, and always in a hurry. He can fix upon nothing; he can rest no where, thinking that every thing is wrong with him; that his faith is only feigned, and his love dissembled; his former claim upon God, as his God, presumption; his confession of him as such nothing but a lie; the goodness of his state, as he once thought nothing but deception; all that viewed him as a believer were deceived by him; and he in the household of faith nothing but a hypocrite, deceived by Satan, and a deceiver of others.

Next comes a dreadful expectation of some *evident token of perdition*; and there is a looking for it, and a looking out after it.—*My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgment.* Psalm cxix. 120. *He will cut me off with pining sickness. I reckoned till the morning; that, as a lion, so will he break all my bones; from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me. I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul. I said, I shall not see the Lord, even the Lord in the land of the living; I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world.* Isai. xxxvii. These were his last gasps and dying groans. *Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, &c.* saith the Psalmist. *He hath sealed up mine iniquity in a bag; I know that thou wilt*

not hold me innocent, says Job. This is the workings of slavish fear, and is a principal ingredient in the spirit of bondage, which Paul calls *the spirit of bondage to fear*; which fear presents the wrath of God in view, and always has the displeasure of God for its object; which wrath is peculiar to mount Sinai, and under which all the bond-servants are, and which often influences even the child of God, and is no less than the reflections of divine anger, reflected from *this glorious and fearful name, the Lord thy God*. Deut. xxviii. 58.

Real believers are always conscious of their base original, both by birth and practice; of the inward corruptions of their nature; the deceitfulness of their own hearts; their easily besetting sins; and their manifold weaknesses, infirmities, slips of the feet, slips of the tongue, and daily imperfections; all which have a tendency to betray them into this *spirit of bondage to fear*; which fear sometimes comes upon them *where no fear is*; as when good tidings are coming to us instead of evil. Hence the many checks and reproofs that are often given unto it in scripture. Carnal fear is rebuked by God himself.—*Fear not, Abraham, I am thy shield*; *fear not, Jacob, to go down into Egypt, for I will be with thee there*. Slavish fear is rebuked by almost every angelic messenger of good news; which good news is to deliver us from legal fear, and to bring gospel love and joy to us. *Fear not, ye shepherds, for I bring you good tidings of great joy*. *Fear not, Zechariah, for thy prayers are heard*.
 Fear

Fear not Daniel, for thou art greatly beloved. Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God; which favour in Christ is to remove God's anger in the law. Fear not, ye women, for I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified. It is I, (saith the Saviour) be not afraid.

This yoke often falls heavy upon the necks of believers when God smites a hypocrite who has formerly stood high in the poor believer's favour, and in outward shew appeared eminent for piety. God smote *Uzza* for his error in staying the ark, and *David* was afraid of God on that day. This act of striking *Uzza* with immediate death was to shew *David* that the mercy-seat needs no assistance from an arm of flesh; for God is not seated on a throne of grace to receive help and strength from man, for he needs none; but to give help and strength to man *in every time of his need*. *David* himself erred in this matter as well as *Uzza*; for the ark was drawn by beasts upon a cart, instead of being carried by consecrated priests upon their shoulders. This copy *David* took from the Philistines, not from *Moses*. And so the yoke of slavish fear brought *David* to use his filial fear, and the object of it, with a little more caution, respect, and reverence. This error *David* confesses. — *And David said unto them, Ye are the chief of the fathers of the Levites; sanctify yourselves, both ye and your brethren, that ye may bring up the ark of the Lord God of Israel unto the place that I have prepared for it. For because we did it not at the first the Lord God made*
a breach

a breach upon us, for that we sought him not after the due order. 1 Chron. xv. 12, 13.

Thus, when Christ informed the apostles of the treachery of Judas, every one, in fearful surprise, suspecting the deceit of his own heart, cried out, *Lord, is it I?* And, when Ananias and Sapphira were struck dead, *great fear came upon all the churches.* And so now, when a hypocrite is discovered, and smitten with madness, given up to *a fearful looking-for of judgment*, or left to himself to commit suicide; this *yoke of slavish fear* often falls upon them that fear God; which sometimes moves them to self-examination, to humble confession, to private prayer, to greater diligence, and to learn a little how to read and judge of professors; and so is among the *all things that work for good to them that love God, and are the called according to his purpose.* Once more, the laws and rules, which a weak believer prescribes to himself to walk by, and the vows, promises, and resolutions which he is too apt to make, and more apt to break, these often betray him into this species of bondage. I come now

3dly, To treat of the *narrowness and contraction of soul* that attends a believer under the influence of this *spirit of bondage.* This legal spirit closes the heart, and bars it up against every warm, cheerful, favoury, and unctuous Christian; yea, such an one will even shun their company and their sight; finding a heart to embrace none, to receive none, to commune with none, no nor even to seek fellowship with any, but

those that are in shackles, bondage, and slavery, as well as himself. "Like loves its like." Hence the Galatians received the judaizing teachers and their companions, who crept into houses, cordially; they were zealously affected by them, and zealously attached to them; even to the danger of excluding Christ himself. But, as for Paul, he had no place in their hearts; no, not as a friend, nor as an apostle, nor even as a true witness for Christ; for they counted him their enemy, and a false apostle. Hence he labours, in his epistle to them, to prove his apostolic office to be by the will of God; that his mission and commission was from Christ alone; his doctrine by immediate revelation, without learning it from man, or so much as seeing them that were apostles before him; and that when he did see them, they gave him the right hand of fellowship, as approving both of him and his doctrine. And he expresses his warmest love to them, calling them his *little children*, telling them that he travailed in birth again for them till Christ was formed in them; that is, he laboured in soul, in writing, and with God in prayer, to get them again out of that legal bondage into liberty; out of that legal fear into gospel love; that Christ might be formed in them; that is, dwell in their hearts by faith, and in their affections as the only hope of future glory. But they called him their enemy for telling them the truth.

The Corinthians' hearts were straitened, bound, and shut up, by these disciples of Moses, in the
same

same manner. They could suffer these fools gladly to mislead them, being themselves so wise; but as for Paul, they wanted a *proof of Christ speaking in him*; though his voice, by Paul, was not weak in them, but mighty, even at the same time. Let their instructors be who, and as many as they might, it was Paul that had begotten them, yet this would not do. They cast the father, and the faithful ambassador, out of their affections; and embraced the ministers of Satan, who were nothing but deceitful workers, *enemies of the cross of Christ*, and who had no god but the god of this world and their own bellies. Paul sends letters to them—*His letters are weighty and powerful*; this even his enemies allowed; *but his speech*, they said, *was weak, and his bodily presence contemptible*; and they charge him with breaking his promise of coming to them, being puffed up with a vain conceit of themselves; while the believers, which were the seals of Paul's own ministry, suffered these fools thus to ridicule their father in Christ; yea, *they suffered these fools gladly*. Thus were these Corinthians legalized, prejudiced, straitened, and as it were shut up under *the spirit of bondage*. But this was not the case with Paul toward them.—*O, ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged; ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. Now for a recompense in the same (I speak as unto my children) be ye also enlarged.* 2 Cor. vi. 11, 12, 13.

Furthermore, As the heart, straitened by a spirit of
bondage,

bondage, is barred up against the saints, and the ministers of the Spirit, and against the evangelical doctrines of the gospel; so it is closed, straitened, and shut up against Christ himself; no extended thoughts are hovering about him, nor meditating on him; no extended views and fresh discoveries of his glorious person, offices, and wondrous undertakings; no faith in exercise, dealing with his blood for peace; with his obedience for righteousness, with his arm for strength, and with his fulness of grace for help in time of need; no affections running out after him, nor placed at the right hand of God, where he sitteth. Hence the kind and endearing entreaties—*Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled.* Song, v. 2.

A soul that has lain long in this bondage does not care to move or stir itself in wisdom's ways. It gets cloyed with reading, hearing the word, and with private and family prayer. It is like a rickety child, ruined for the want of nursing; it is death to move it, much more to shake it; it had rather sit still all its days than move its limbs. A soul thus influenced walks not in the Spirit, but in the wrath of the law. —*O, thou that art named the house of Jacob, is the Spirit of the Lord straitened? Are these his doings?* Micah ii. 7. Job reasoned with *unprofitable talk, and restrained prayer before God*, instead of looking constantly to Jesus, confessing, and praying; which, in order to obtain enlargement, ought to have been done.—*Even so would he have removed thee out of the strait*

strait into a broad place, where there is no straitness.
Job xxxvi. 16.

A soul thus legalized is straitened at the throne of grace; he has not the whole church of God in his heart, nor yet in his mouth; he prays only for himself, and that in a very cold, lifeless, sparing manner, as if God was as poor, and his heart as narrow, as his own. Jehoshaphat seeks the Lord by Elisha only for *water for his army*. The prophet tells him to *dig the valley full of ditches, and there shall be neither dew nor rain, yet that valley shall be full of water: and this is but a light thing in the eyes of the Lord*; hinting thereby that the Lord had more weighty blessings to bestow than these. But this was all that was wanted. *Ask a sign of the Lord thy God*, saith the prophet Isaiah to Ahaz, *ask it either in the height, or in the depth. I will not ask*, saith he, *neither will I tempt the Lord. Ye have wearied men*, saith the prophet, *and will ye weary my God also? Also, the Lord himself shall give you a sign, without asking, behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son*. Hence the kind exhortation to such a poor straitened, narrow soul, *I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt; open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it*. Psalm lxxxi. 10.

A soul thus straitened is barred against all good counsel, advice, and comfort. He thinks that every person who labours to enlarge him only wants to *heal his wounds slightly, and to cry, Peace, peace, where there is no peace*; and so to set him down short of the

promised

promised rest. They are even afraid of light, love, and liberty. *My soul refuses to be comforted*, says one, Psalm lxxvii. 2. *Look away from me, labour not to comfort me*, saith another. Isa. xxii. 4. I come now,

Fourthly, To treat of the wrath that works in us, which is this—spirit of bondage.—*The law worketh wrath*. Rom. iv. 15. All that the broken law ministers, reveals, or works, in a man, is the anger, displeasure, indignation, and wrath, of God at the sins of men; which wrath is revealed in the law against all ungodliness, and is treasured up there. *Fury is not in me*, saith the Lord. It is not in him as considered and viewed by the eye of faith in Christ. Here God cannot, God will not, be wroth with us; but get back to the law, and there we are sure to feel it, as nothing but wrath and death can be found in that broken covenant, which is *a killing letter*, for God ministers not the Spirit by it. Furthermore, God's wrath can never work where there is no sin; but where sin is there it will work, if we go to it. It got a sad hold of Christ; *it melted his heart in the midst of his body*, while *he bore our sins upon the tree*. When he got rid of our sin he got rid of his Father's wrath. And it works sadly in the conscience of a believer, and stirs up his old man, when he loses sight of Christ, and gets back to that old yoke; for the burden of that precept was never easy, nor the yoke of bondage ever light. Hence the sad complaints of many gracious souls when influenced by it.—*I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath*. Surely against me is he turned;

turned; he turneth his hand against me all the day. My flesh and my skin hath he made old; he hath broken my bones. He hath made my chain heavy; when I cry and shout he shutteth out my prayer. He was unto me as a bear lying in wait, and as a lion in secret places. He hath filled me with bitterness; he hath made me drunk with wormwood; he hath broken my teeth with gravel stones, and covered me with ashes; he hath moved my soul far from peace, and I forget prosperity. Lam. iii. Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke, then a great ransom cannot deliver thee. Job xxxvi. 18. For in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee. Isaiah lx. 10. For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him; I hid me, and was wroth. I have seen his ways, and will heal him, and restore comforts unto him. Isaiah li. 17. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with great mercies will I gather thee, &c. &c. Thou wast angry with me; but thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me. Hence it appears plain that the law stirreth up the corruptions of the human heart, the enmity of the carnal mind, the old man of sin; and works the wrath and anger of God in the conscience; so that there is wrath, fear, and torment. And the workings of this anger and wrath of the law stir up the anger and wrath of man against both God and man.

Sarah, under this bondage, deals hardly with her maid, drives her from the tent, and makes her fly from her presence; quarrels with Abraham.—My

wrong be upon thee, and the Lord judge between me and thee. No peace can be had while this Hagar, this mount Sinai in the figure, is working in the heart. Job finds fault with all his friends; calling them *miserable comforters, forgers of lies, and physicians of no value*; and there was not a wise man among them.

Asaph, while this chastening rod was upon him, was *envious at the prosperity of the wicked, because they are not in trouble as other men, and because they had no bands in their death*. Jeremiah finds fault with the man who brought tidings to his father, saying, *a man child is born unto thee, making him very glad. And let that man be as the cities which the Lord overthrew, and repented not; and let him hear the cry in the morning, and the shouting at noontide; because he slew me not from the womb; or that my mother might have been my grave, and her womb to be always big with me*.
Jer. xx. 15—17.

The best and most even tempered person upon earth, under the workings of this bondage, will hiss like a viper. It is a leaven that will ferment, and stir up every corruption of the heart, set all in confusion, and fill the soul with nothing but wrath and indignation. And, if such an one has got nobody present to find fault and quarrel with, he will quarrel at any thing that comes in his head. Job spends a whole chapter against his birth-day.—*And Job cursed his day. Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived. Let that day be darkness; let not God regard it from above; neither*

let the light shine upon it; let darkness and the shadow of death stain it; let a cloud dwell upon it; let the blackness of the day terrify it; let it not be joined to the days of the year; let it not come into the number of the months; let them curse it that curse the day. Job iii.

Nor does the enmity of the heart, when stirred up by a spirit of bondage, stay itself upon men and things only; but even God himself comes in for a share.—*The carnal mind is enmity against God.* And this enmity is a member of the old man, which he will hold fast as long as he lives. Job multiplied words against God, and lied again his right. *I sat alone, saith Jeremiah, because of thy hand, for thou hast filled me with indignation. Why is my pain perpetual, and my wound incurable, which refuseth to be healed? Wilt thou be altogether unto me as a liar, and as waters that fail?* Jer. xv. 17, 18. *Thou hast cast off, and abhorred; thou hast been wroth with thine anointed; thou hast made void the covenant of thy servant; thou hast profaned his crown; thou hast broken down his hedges, and brought his strong holds to ruin; thou hast set up the right hand of his adversaries, and hast made all his enemies to rejoice.* Psalm viii. 9. *Thus the foolishness of a man perverteth his way, and his heart fretteth against the Lord.* These are some of the heavy charges that are brought against the Father of all mercies; and confirms, with a witness, the truth of his own proclamation, when he proclaimed his own name—*The Lord, the Lord God, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in goodness and truth.* And if
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he were not so I know not what would become of us.

Thus the law worketh wrath. It communicates the wrath that is revealed in it to us; it worketh the wrath of God in the soul, stirs up the wretched enmity of the heart, and fills it with anger against every thing. Such a soul fretteth against God. It envies the happiness of the righteous, and the prosperity of the wicked. This bondage fills the soul with hatred, *and makes men hateful, and hating one another.* The heart is filled with madness, and full of cursing and bitterness at every cross, and every thing that lies in the way, though he doth not spit it out. Such an one views God as an enemy, and one that mars his counsels, breaks his purposes, thwarts his designs, and fights against him, when (as he thinks) he aims well and means well. It fills the soul with self-pity; and such an one sits down, and considers himself as an injured man. He will cavil at the master of the household about every penny that is given to another; and is not satisfied with the penny given to him, thinking that himself deserved more. He will limit the Holy One of Israel, and cannot allow the Lord to do as he will with his own. He will envy the happiness and state of every body; think his own lot to be the worst that ever fell to the share of man; and therefore be discontented with every thing and grateful for nothing.

And, for my part, I know of no trial so sharp, no cross so heavy, no sensations so dreadful, no exercise

so severe, no dispensation so terrible, no rod that enters so deep, as to be left to struggle with legal bondage. The smiles of a gracious Father are changed into the frowns of an angry Judge; liberty, with respect to the enjoyment of it, is exchanged for bondage; happiness for misery; peace for war; familiarity for shyness; indulgence for cold indifference; tenderness for sensible neglect; attracting love into forbidding terror; a mercy-seat for a throne of judgment; and the best of friends into the appearance of an enemy.—*Terrors are turned upon me (says Job); they pursue my soul as the wind, and my welfare passeth away as a cloud. My bones are pierced in me in the night season, and my sinews take no rest. He hath cast me into the mire, and I am become like dust and ashes. I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me; I stand up, and thou regardest me not. Thou art become cruel to me. With thy strong hand thou opposest thyself against me; my harp also is turned into mourning, and my organ into the voice of them that weep. I come now*

5thly, To the *suspicion and jealousy* that attends this spirit of bondage. The Lord our God, *whose name is jealous, is a jealous God. Exod. xxiv. 14. How long, Lord; wilt thou be angry for ever; shall thy jealousy burn like fire? Psalm lxxix. 5.* The spirit of bondage brings a little of this ingredient with it. The spouse in the Song felt this pretty sharply; she refused to open to her beloved, and so he withdrew; she fought him, but found him not; she called him, but he gave her no answer. He then went down into the garden;

garden; that is, down among the more meek, humble, and lowly souls. This she knew, and begged these young daughters to stay her with flagons, and to comfort her with apples, for she was sick of love; and desired them to tell her beloved so when they saw him. Hence her own description of her feelings at this time—*Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death, jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.* Song viii. 6.

It is easy to see where the penman of the Song learnt this lesson.—*And the Lord was angry with Solomon, because his heart was turned from the Lord God of Israel which had appeared to him twice, and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods. Wherefore the Lord said unto Solomon, Forasmuch as this thing is done of thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and give it to thy servant, (1 Kings xi. 9—11), who was Jeroboam.* The prophet *Abijah* meets *Jeroboam*, and tells him that he should reign over ten tribes, because *Solomon* had served other gods. Moreover, God promised by him that, if *Jeroboam* would walk in God's statutes, as *David* did, God would be with him, and build him a sure house. *Solomon* hears of all this, and in his desperate madness fights against the very decree of God; determined to make his promise void, and his prophet a liar; for *Solomon* sought to kill *Jeroboam*, but *Jeroboam* fled into Egypt. 1 Kings xi. 40. *Solomon*, in this rage of jealousy, had quite forgot-

ten his own proverb—*He that doth violence to the blood of any person, let him flee to the pit, let no man stay him.* However, God kept him from his purpose; for Solomon was not to fly to the pit of hell as a murderer, nor to be beaten with eternal stripes.—*I will for this afflict the seed of David, but not for ever.* 1 Kings xi. 39. *And the Lord stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite; and God stirred up another adversary, Rezin, the son of Eliadah; and Jeroboam he lift up his hand against the king.*

Such idolatry, and alienation of affections from God, God calls *the provoking of his sons and of his daughters*; and, as Solomon had provoked the Almighty to jealousy with them that were no gods, so God provokes him to jealousy by them which were no saints.

Sarah was afflicted with a little of this fire when, in her wisdom, she would further the coming of the promised seed, by giving up her bed to Hagar; at whose conception the sterility of the family was fairly proved to lie at the door of *Sarah*, and not at the door of Abraham. She drives *Hagar* out of the tent, to get rid of the cross that she had brought upon herself. The angel of God sends *Hagar* back again, that *Sarah* might be filled with her own ways. How she felt this I must leave those to guess who are in the secret. I believe she was never perfectly healed of this disease till she had got the promised seed upon her knees, and the bond woman and her son out of the tent.

When the spirit of jealousy comes upon a man, it doth not stay here. Such an one is not only jealous of the love and favour of God, so as to envy the happiness of all that enjoy the light of his blessed countenance; but he is jealous of his own honour, and jealous of the affections, good will, and applause, of every body. Such an one cannot bear to hear another spoken well of; he views every one in any esteem a rival to him. The apostles disputed which should be the greatest, though they were ashamed to own it; *and the ten were filled with indignation at James and John*, for wanting to sit at the right hand and at the left of Christ in his kingdom, which they supposed was to be a temporal one.

This jealousy often terminates in carnal jealousy. The man is jealous of his wife, or she is jealous of her husband; and such souls are preparing their bitter waters, ashes, and jealousy-offerings, all the day long; for *jealousy is the rage of man*, and so it is of woman; *and such will not rest contented though thou givest many gifts*; nothing can remove it, but him that sent it; for it is the workings of the spirit of bondage, and a terrible ingredient in it; and let those, who have felt the bitterness of it, take heed that they do not procure these things to themselves by provoking God, or others, to jealousy; for, if they do not procure them by these, they are not like to have them themselves.

The reasons of God's sending these things upon his people are these; God is good, great, and glorious; and

is jealous of his own praise, glory, and honour, which he will never give to another. God is a husband; and is jealous of the love, obedience, and affections, of his own church, and will not be provoked with a whorish heart. Now, if his people bow their knees and give his praise to idols, as Solomon did; or if any rival to God be set up, called *the image of jealousy, which provoketh to jealousy*; or if the affections be alienated from God, and gone after covetousness and the love of money, as Israel's heart was, which provoked God to wrath; or if inordinate affections, which are a member of the old man, be indulged to the creature, as David's was to Absalom, and Jacob's to Rachel, Jephthah's to his daughter, Jacob's to Joseph, or Eli's to Hophni and Phineas—these rivals to God are sure to be removed out of the way, or left to be a snare to the indulger. For, when God is moved to anger, wrath, and jealousy, by the provocations of his people, he will then send the spirit of bondage upon them, and influence them with the same anger, wrath, and jealousy, which his people provoke him to.

This may be seen in the matter of Eli—*Wherefore saith God, kick ye my sacrifice, and at mine offering which I have commanded in mine habitation, and honourst thy sons above me?* 1 Sam. ii. 29. They kicked at God's sacrifice, which provoked the Lord; they abused the women that came to the house of God, till people abhorred the offerings of the Lord; which is called *grieving the Lord*. Eli honoured his sons before God, by continuing them (from motives
of

of affection) in the priest's office, whereby God was dishonoured. And all this God turns upon Eli—Samuel shall provoke Eli, as his sons had provoked God. *And thou shalt see an enemy in my habitation; and there shall not be an old man in thine house for ever; and the man of thine, whom I shall not cut off from mine altar, shall be to consume thine eyes, and to grieve thine heart.*

1 Sam. ii. 33. Thus Eli was to see an enemy, a rival, in God's house, who was to consume his eyes; whom he was to view with a suspicious and jealous eye to the grief of his heart. After this God begins to provoke him: for he speaks to Samuel, though a child, but no more to Eli. And thus God, when provoked to jealousy, puts those who provoke him, as it were, in his own place; then asks them how they like it, *and if they have not procured these things to themselves in that they have forsaken the Lord their God.* Jerem. ii. 17. And this is no more than the law of retaliation—measure for measure. I come now to the

6th head. *Rebellion and discontent.* Jonah is ordered to Nineveh. He rebels, and goes to Joppa, in order to flee to Tarsus from the presence of God. He is thrown overboard, and sinks in the belly of hell. Then he is humbled, and prays heartily. God brings him up again, and repeats his command to Nineveh. Jonah goes, and delivers his message, which was all that God required of him. He might then have gone home again, if he would; but Jonah seeks another quarrel, like Lot's wife, who
looked

looked back to see what became of Sodom : Jonah *makes a booth, and sits there to see what becomes of the city.* He had no orders for all this ; he might have left the event of his message to God. Jonah expects an overthrow of all the buildings by an earthquake, or some strange judgment ; God meant an overthrow of idolatry. Jonah expects that all would presently go crying into hell ; but God intended an universal cry to heaven. He begins to breathe out his anger against God ; God breathes an east wind, and smites Jonah. Jonah faints ; so he may—*God fainteth not, neither is weary.* God raises a gourd ; Jonah is pleased. God smites it ; Jonah is angry again, and *does well to be angry, even unto death.* Suppose he is—what of that ? Nineveh shall stand in spite of him. His message was an *overthrow*, not a *destruction*. But God did not tell Jonah what he meant by an overthrow ; then it proves (what every body knows) that *God giveth not account of any of his matters.* Job xxxiii. 13.

Jeremiah flees from the work, and is determined to have no more of it. God's anger is to come in like a torrent, and not one prophet to stand in the gap for Israel. A Jewish captain caught him, and brought him back, taking him for a traitor, who was going to fall away to the Chaldeans. *He is brought to the princes, who are wrath with him ; they smite him, and put him in the prison.* Jer. xxxvii. 13, 14. Moses desires to be killed outright, that he may not see his wretchedness.

A foul

A soul thus influenced with the spirit of bondage, while he is harassed with a legal conscience, is contented no where. The psalmist wants the *wings of a dove to fly away, and remain afar off in the wilderness*. Another wishes that he had given up the ghost as soon as he came forth from the womb, and that no eye had seen him. Another is for a *place of wayfaring men*, that he may leave the people, and go from them. Elijah entreats the Lord to take away his life; which was what God never intended to do.

Every affliction under this spirit of bondage is singular, and works discontent—*Had it been an enemy, I could have borne it; or, if it had been him that hated me, I would have hid myself from him; but it was thou, &c.*—every thing but the right. Leah envies Rachel's beauty. Rachel envies Leah's fruitfulness. But nothing of this is felt while the love of Christ is enjoyed. I now proceed to the

7th particular. *Despondency and desperation*. The operations of this spirit of bondage, and the sensible displeasure of God felt in it, bow the soul down.—*I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long*. The holy Spirit of God is grieved, and does not operate as a comforter; hence the complaint—*The comforter, that should relieve my soul, is far from me*. Lam. i. 16. *Thou hast removed my soul far off from peace; I forget prosperity; and I said, My strength and my hope are perished from the Lord*. Lam. iii. 17, 18.

The sensible presence of God appears to be
wholly

wholly withdrawn, and nothing left but a bitter sense of our loss, and the remembrance of former halcyon days, which the soul is ready to conclude are gone for ever.—*O that I were as in months past, as in the days when God preserved me, when his candle shined upon my head, and when by his light I walked through darkness; as I was in the days of my youth, when the secret of God was upon my tabernacle; when the Almighty was yet with me; when my children were about me; when I washed my steps with butter, and the rock poured me out rivers of oil!*
 Job. xxix. 2—6.

Looking back to former indulgences, and to former banquets, is the chief employ of a soul thus influenced.—*There is bread enough in my father's house, and to spare, saith the prodigal, but I perish with hunger; and, fearing that he should be damned as an apostate or as an hypocrite in Zion, he wished to be reduced to the level of a common bond-servant.—I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son; make me as an hired servant.* Thus legal bondage, meeting with guilt in his conscience, brought him to himself.

But then it may be asked, why such good men, and especially such a man as Job, who obtained so good a report through faith, and to whom God gave so great a testimony as to call him *a perfect and an upright man*, &c. &c. who was so abundant in every good word and work—why such a man should be exercised with legal bondage again? That he was
 abundant

abundant in good works is plain by what he advances.—*I made a covenant with mine eyes, to keep my heart chaste. If I have walked with vanity, or if my foot hath basted to deceit; if my step hath turned out of the way, and mine heart walked after mine eyes; and if any blot hath cleaved to my hands; then let me sow, and let another eat. If I did despise the cause of my man servant or maid servant when they contended with me; if I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail, or have eaten my morsel alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof; if I have seen any perish for want of clothing, or any poor without covering; if his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep. The stranger did not lodge in the street, but I opened my doors to the traveller; yea, I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I plucked the spoil out of the teeth of the oppressor, and caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. He had instructed many; his words had upholden them that were falling, and he had strengthened the feeble knees. O that God would hear me! Behold, my desire is that the Almighty would answer me, and that mine adversary had written a book: surely I would take it upon my shoulder, and bind it as a crown to me: I would declare unto him the number of my steps; as a prince would I go near unto him. I desire to be weighed in an even balance, that the Almighty may know mine integrity. Job xxix. xxxi.*

Now it may be asked, Are not these good works?

And

And it must be answered, Yes, they are. And is not this being fruitful, and abounding in the work of the Lord? It certainly is. But he calls all these performances his own.—I did this—I did that; but never acknowledges the help and power of God, which *worked in him both to will and to do all these things.* He takes all the glory of his good works to himself, and robs God of the glory of his grace. If he was rich, who made him so? If he eschewed evil, who gave him a tender conscience and that fear? If he was liberal, who opened his heart? David says, *What am I and my people, that we should offer thus willingly? To some it is given to gather together and to heap up, but not an heart given to do good therewith.* And who made Job to differ? If Job instructed many, who gave him wisdom? If he was eyes to the blind, who gave him understanding? If he strengthened the weak hands, from whence came the blessing and the power? Job takes the glory of all these things to himself; but God was the agent and author of all these good works, and will not give his glory to another.

Come, Job (says God), you have performed wonders; and I must be greatly indebted to you, to be sure, for all these good fruits, which were put forth by my Spirit. You call for the Almighty to answer you. You call me your adversary, and wish that I had written a book of your performances; you would take it on your shoulder, and bind it as a crown to you, and as a prince you would draw
near

near to me. You desire to be weighed in an even balance, that I may know your integrity. You desire to reason with God. You tell me enough of what you have done; but you say nothing of my working in you to will and to do. Wherefore I will cease working in you. My presence, my visitations, my dew of grace, shall be withdrawn; and I will fend my law and its demands into your conscience, and you shall see what that requires, and how infinitely short your obedience comes when laid to that rule; and by that law I will neither minister my grace to you, nor work in you; that law is your debt book, that law is the hand-writing that is against you. Now cast up your accounts, and see what I owe you, or what you owe me. By my law you shall have the knowledge of your sin, and in that law I will hide my face, and I shall then see how you go on without me.—*Wherefore hidest thou thy face from me, and holdest me for thine enemy? Wilt thou break a leaf; wilt thou pursue the dry stubble? For thou writest bitter things against me, and makest me to possess the iniquities of my youth.* Job xiii. 24—26. Job is now got to the black mount. God's face is hid. He feels the law working wrath in him—*Thou holdest me for thine enemy.* The hand-writing is before him—*Thou writest bitter things against me.* And by the law is the knowledge of sin—*I possess the iniquities of my youth.*

Why do you cry out, Job? This is the even balance of my sanctuary, in which you wished to be weighed.

weighed. Come, Job, I have not done with you; I will take you away from my mercy-seat: the Ransom, the Surety, and the Redeemer, that I have provided, shall be out of sight for a while; and I will draw near to you in wrath, and on a throne of judgment; for thou knowest but little of me yet. *And dost thou open thine eyes upon such an one, and bringest me into judgment with thee? O that thou wouldst hide me in the grave; that thou wouldst keep me in secret till thy wrath be past; that thou wouldst appoint me a set time, and remember me.* Job xiv. 3—13.

Now, Job, you are at a throne of judgment, and you feel my wrath in the law against you as a transgressor; and where are now all your good works? Will they answer for you? Oh, no; if he will *enter into judgment with man, he cannot answer him one of a thousand.* In this even balance you are found wanting, Job. I am indeed; *therefore put me in a surety with thee.* And now where wilt thou go? O let me go to the throne of grace. *O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his seat.* What do you want to get there for, Job? Why to get away from a throne of judgment, from the handwriting, from the wrath of God, and from my angry Judge; *for there, at the mercy-seat, the righteous might dispute with him; so should I be delivered for ever from my Judge.* Job xxiii. 7.

A child of God (like Job) who has known the benefits and blessings of a mercy-seat; who has experienced the dew of God's grace; who has been

blessed

blessed with the visitation of God ; who has felt the
 candle of the Lord shining upon his head, and the
 Almighty's presence with him, and the glory of God
 fresh in him (Job xxix) ; I say, for such a soul to be
 brought to the darkness of the old mount (where the
 face of God is hid) to be placed afresh before the
 hand-writing of the law ; to have his corruptions
 stirred up by it ; to possess the iniquities of his youth ;
 to feel the wrath of God, yea the terrors, curses, and
 threatenings, of the law ; all these *arrows of the Al-*
mighty are within me (saith Job), *the poison whereof*
drinketh up my spirit ; the terrors of God do set them-
selves in array against me. Job vi. 4. I say, for a
 soul that is thus dealt with, and sensibly set before a
 throne of judgment, to be shut up in legal bondage,
 and grasped by the hand of an angry God, under
 which sensible anger Satan tempted him to blaspheme
 the Almighty, because he appeared in such wrath
 against him ; I say, such a law-work, works nothing
 but despondency and desperation—*Do ye imagine to*
reprove words, and the speeches of one that is desperate ?
 Job vi. 26.

We have got some fools in a profession, who tell
 us that a believer cannot be entangled again in legal
 bondage.—“ It is the working of his own corrup-
 tions,” say they, “ and Satan’s temptations.” But
 the Spirit of truth calls it *the anger of God, the wrath*
of God, the arrows of God, the terrors of God, the in-
digination of God, the burning jealousy of God, the heavy
band of God, the provocations of God, and the judgment

of God: and, until such fools can distinguish between the law of God and their own corruptions; between the arrows of God and the fiery darts of Satan; they are ignorant of God's teaching, and ought to hold their peace, and be swift to hear and slow to speak, and not set themselves up for masters, *lest they fall into the condemnation of the devil.*

But the true case and state of such men is this—They are conscious to themselves that they are in a splendid profession, and yet are ignorant of this divine teaching; wherefore they call the lashes of their consciences, their fears, their apprehensions, their bondage, &c. the workings of the old man, and Satan's devices against them; and that bearing up under and against these, is fighting the good fight of faith: whereas the truth of the matter is this—It is the wrath of God, the bondage of the law, and the curse of it, working in their souls for their hypocritical profession; being destitute of the grace of God, and having never been born again of God; so that their fighting is beating the air. It is not the fight of faith, but of rebellion; not against Satan, but against both God and conscience; and God makes this manifest in every professor, whom he gives up to *hardness of heart*, to a *fearful looking for of judgment*, to *dammable heresies*, to *open profanity*, to *madness*, or to *self-murder*. I proceed now,

8thly, To shew the *sensible dryness* and *barrenness* that attend legal bondage. By the law God doth not communicate his Spirit, and without his influence

ence there can be no fruit. Refreshings come from God's presence; but in the law his presence can never be enjoyed; no good fruit, unless we abide in the vine; for under the legal yoke Christ profits us nothing, with respect to sensible union and communion; our joy withers, and love waxes cold. No blossoming like a rose with divine enlargement; no heavenly-mindedness, no life and peace enjoyed; nothing felt within but God's anger, man's rebellion, and Satan's assaults; nothing without but gloominess, fresh scenes of trouble, and dissatisfaction with every thing. A preacher under this spirit may storm and rage, and think to frighten men out of their sins, and drive them to heaven with these lashes of legal terrors, and the thunderbolts of damnation; but all in vain; sinners are only hardened by it, and saints are starved. It is no better than attempting to "force the Spirit of Grace itself, and bind his confort Liberty."—Milton.

Such a soul, re-entangled with the yoke of bondage, communicates nothing but bondage to others. His conversation is nothing but complaints; groaning under sin, and talking of his doubts, fears, and dreadful apprehensions. His converse savours of nothing but horror, terror, torment, bondage, and wrath, dread, death, and damnation; and what he discourses of, that he leaves behind him wherever he goes. He is barren in his soul, barren in his closet, barren in his family, barren in the pulpit, barren in the pew, barren in the church, and barren in the world.

world. No unction, no salt, no oil of joy, no savory meat, no water of life, comes by the law: it is a dark and dry mountain in a barren land; and he that goes there is filled with darkness, and his conversation is nothing but confusion, vain jangling, inconsistencies, and self-contradiction. Such souls are dried up like a potsherd; their joys are withered away, and they may cry, as others have done, *My leanness, my leanness, wo unto me!*

And, as for those poor blind souls who tell us that legal bondage can never again influence a child of God; but that all this bondage, fear, wrath, and terror, are only the stirrings of corruption—they would do well to inform us how corruption can work without the law; for *where there is no law there is no transgression; the motions of sin are by the law; the strength of sin is the law; by the law is the knowledge of sin. The law was added that the offence might abound;* and sin takes occasion by the commandment, and works in the members through the commandment. The law is man's debt book, and reveals the wrath of the creditor against the debtor. In Christ sin is done away, and God is well pleased; but no where else. And, as to making Satan the only instigator of the stirrings of corruption, is making him divided against himself.—*The strong man armed* (in an unawakened sinner) *keeps his goods in peace:* and his work with a backsliding saint is to rock him to sleep, or lull him into carnal security, as he did David when he fell. It was not Satan, but God
by

by his prophet, that awakened him out of his lethargy. The law therefore is a dreadful chastening rod in the hand of God; and, though there is no vindictive wrath to a chosen vessel, Christ having answered for him; yet a believer, influenced by a spirit of bondage, and gone back to the law, feels no less than the wrath and anger of God working in him; as it is written, *In my wrath I smote thee.—Thou wast angry with me, but thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me.—His anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life; weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.—In a little wrath I hid my face from thee, but in great mercies will I gather thee.* Which leads me to the

9th head, namely, *A backwardness or reluctance to all that is good.* The scripture, in many places, speaks against such a soul, who cannot exercise faith on the promises. His heart is shut up, the bible is a sealed book to him, and therefore it gets out of favour with him.—*Repent, and do thy first works, &c.*

The ordinances are a dry breast. He cannot mix faith with the good tidings, and therefore comes with reluctance, rather driven with terror than drawn by love.—*I have somewhat against thee; thou hast left thy first love.*

The cheerful countenances of lively faints are rather a grief and trouble to him than otherwise. He cannot help envying them even in the house of God; he looks at them with a jealous eye; and often concludes that he is like Saul, who, when left of

God, hated David. "Every sermon I hear," saith such a soul, "will rise up in judgment against me, and occasion my greater damnation." And, were it not for the strong hand of God upon him, the ways of Zion would be unoccupied by him. As to Christian conference, it only discovers his nakedness; *instead of well set hair*, he appears in *baldness*, and chooses at times to sit solitary, *like a sparrow alone upon the house-top*, *like a pelican of the wilderness*, or an *owl of the desert*; yea, he had rather get behind a corner, or cross the street, than meet a child of God who walks in the light of the Lord's countenance.

Family and closet prayer brings nothing in; he therefore goes with reluctance to it, and performs it with grief, under slavish fear and sensible displeasure; and, not finding nearness of access, nor success, in praying, he is backward to it.—*But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob, and thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.*

His love being chilled, and waxed cold, his heart is shut up to the cause of God, and to the poor and needy of the Lord's household; he is not a cheerful giver; far from it; and, if covetousness was one of his constitutional sins, it will hover over him again, and cleave to him, though he is ashamed of it; and, as he can get no comfort from his God, nor any with the saints, he is cold and indifferent both to God and to his people. I come now to discover,

rothly, His *legal strivings against sin and corruption* while under this spirit of bondage. He finds his soul

bitter, and his temper peevish. He murmurs, and inwardly frets, at every thing that makes against him; and indeed nothing seems to go well with him; his spirit is stiff and stubborn; God, in a way of providence as well as grace, seems *to walk contrary to him, and he walks contrary to God. He is froward; and God shews himself froward.* His enmity against God is stirred up; and hard thoughts of God possess him, which at times are unadvisedly spoken with his lips; or, as the prophet says, *his tongue muttereth perverseness.* Against these corruptions he strives hard; but they stir not a whit the less for that. He goes forth in the morning, determined to watch his conduct more narrowly, and to be more upon his guard than ever: but, when he balances his books at night, he is just where he was, or rather worse. He then resolves, he promises, and he vows; but all in vain; he breaks through all in thought, word, and deed; for there is no spiritual might communicated to strengthen the inward man by the law, no help but *from the sanctuary; no strength but out of Zion.*

He now determines (like Job) to give all up, come on him what will; or else to harden himself in sorrow; when another cloud of sensible displeasure rolls over him; fears, terror, and expectations of worse to come, move him again; to work he goes afresh, and soon finds himself *plunged into the same ditch again, till his own clothes abhor him.* He stands amazed at what is come upon him; he cannot make a judgment of himself, nor of his state; nor does he know what

to say.—*If I say, I am perfect, it shall prove me perverse; and if I am righteous I will not know my soul.* He weeps, melts, and confesses; his eye pours out tears unto God. Another billow rolls over him, and he is again hardened, feeling himself as stubborn as an ass, and as rebellious as Satan.—*Let me alone,* says he, *that I may take comfort a little; let me alone, that I may swallow down my spittle. Thou fillest me with bitterness, and givest me the waters of gall to drink.* He wishes to examine his former profession carefully by the word of God; but he is too dark to make a proper judgment, and too confused to come to any point of certainty. Have I any claim upon God, or have I not? Is my faith genuine, or is it presumption? If the latter, I have committed the unpardonable sin. His heart and flesh fail at the thought, and the spirit of heaviness sinks him. A ray of light shines into him, which is eclipsed in a moment. A promise comes, but brings no power nor deliverance. Hope moves, and the soul melts; *but that passes away as a cloud.* One single word at the latter end of a sermon, and that is all; and sometimes even that is coyly put away, and in thought applied to another, who is more worthy. He cannot please conscience, nor will conscience be reconciled to him. He is in himself miserable, and he makes all miserable about him. *Cheerfulness is singing songs to a heavy heart;* he therefore hates it. He is a companion for none but those in the hospital; and if he meets one more miserable than himself, he will set to work to comfort

fort him, and hold forth that consolation to his patient which he cannot take to himself.

He will sit down and quarrel with God; but, if he hears another at it, he will reprove him for his rebellion. He cavils at the word of God; but he cannot bear that another should. In his heart he will rail at the preacher, and at his sermon too; but he will not suffer any body else to speak evil of either. He wants ease, but he is afraid of it; he wants comfort, but refuses to take it; and he wants healing, but hates them that try to heal him, lest it should be done slightly, and lest they should cry, Peace, when God had not spoken peace. He diets himself—he fasts, *he eats herbs*: he scruples this, and that—*taste not, touch not, handle not*—but he is barren still. I come now to the

11th head, Which is the *miserable success* that attends this legal labour. All his striving against sin in his own strength is like Peter's resolution, only betrays him into sin, and into the sieve of Satan; for without Christ, he can do nothing. And every time he sins there is something fresh for the wrath of the law to work on, and fresh matter for conscience to accuse of; both which awaken his fears, and summon all his terrors about him.—*If I sin, then thou markest me, and wilt not acquit me from mine iniquity. Thou renewest thy witnesses against me, and increasest thine indignation upon me: changes and war are against me.* Job x. 14, 17.

Hardness of heart always attends this labour in
vain

vain. The poor creature may groan till his breast bone be sore, but his heart cannot melt; nor can he pour out either his soul, or one penitential tear, to God, without a ray from the sun of righteousness, and that is seldom more than momentary.—*Why hast thou made us to err from thy way, and hardened our hearts from thy fear?*

Cutting disappointments attend this legal labour. He promises himself rest in this place, but finds none; he expects relief from this book, and under that preacher; he thinks such a morning will bring peace, and the next sabbath will set all to rights. But none of his purposes stand.—*My purposes are broken off, even the thoughts of mine heart.* Job. xvii. 11.

He is ready to conclude that his former experience of the divine favour was nothing but a trap, intended to set him as a fairer butt for God's indignation, and that he will take an advantage of all his former humble confessions, and condemn him out of his own mouth.—*He hath bent his bow, and set me as a mark for the arrow.* Lam. iii. 12.

A self-righteous spirit works sadly in the soul at such times as these. He will vindicate himself, and cast all the blame upon God. *Wilt thou disannul my judgments? wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous?* Job xl. 8.

Sad darkness and ignorance attend the soul under this legal bondage; and yet such souls have much pride and self-conceit. Hence Job is charged with *darkening counsel by words without knowledge.* Job.

xxxvii. 2; *uttering things which he understood not, things too wonderful for him, which he knew not.* Job. xlii. 3.

There is in such a soul a strife with the Almighty, and a disapprobation of his measures; a censuring his providence, and an arraignment of his conduct.— But *who ever hardened himself against him, or who ever strove with him, and prospered? Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters.* Job xxxiii. 13.

This is *deep calling unto deep*, one trouble answering another, and the ill success attending it. This *bringing forth wind* is all the fruit produced by one entangled with this yoke of bondage; who labours to get victory over sin by his own arm, and to get peace and comfort from his own performances. One believing view of Christ, or one propitious look from Christ, and nothing else, will deliver a soul from this grievous, this galling, yoke of bondage.

1. I shall now mention a few things that generally precede, or go before, this yoke of bondage, as procuring causes of it; and one is an *itching ear*. The Galatians and the Corinthians were not satisfied with the truth, nor yet with the apostle; and therefore got this legal leaven by the ministers of Satan. They turned their ears from the truth that maketh free, and got the law that genders to bondage.

2. Rash and unrighteous censuring and judging of the Lord's people, making his preachers *offenders for a word*; or for condemning what they never felt, what they never understood, and what they cannot disprove;

disprove; is most sure, in the end, to bring on this yoke, and themselves at the bar of judgment; for to condemn the just is an abomination to God. Hence the caution—*Judge not, that ye be not judged; for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged.* Matt. vii. 2. A man who judges in spiritual matters must be a person of good experience, in church authority, and of good discernment; and one who has truth at the root, truth in view, and the honour of God, and not his own, at heart.

3. Prejudice conceived, and enmity cherished in the heart, against a preacher, or against a brother, without a just cause, or even if there be a real cause, is sure, sooner or later, to bring on this yoke of bondage. The servant, that obtained forgiveness for ten thousand talents, could not forgive his brother the debt of five hundred pence; he was therefore delivered to the bondage of the law, the wrath of God, the lashes of conscience, and the darts of Satan; all which tormented him till he could yield that submission and resignation to God, and that affection for his brother that is due unto God, and to his brother for God's sake. "Never," says a wise man, "judge another till thou hast put thyself in his place," lest, when *thou judgest another, thou condemnest thine own self. And thinkest thou this, O man, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?* Rom. ii. 1, 3.

4. Reading erroneous books, and attempting to be *wise above what is written*, has betrayed many into the entanglement of this yoke of bondage; when a
false

false fire, and fresh views of things, has wonderfully enamoured them, bringing fresh sparks of light and heat, whilst the old fire from the altar, and the good old wine, have been uninflaming and unpalatable to them, and they have been charmed till they were poisoned, and have been like *Ephraim, broken in judgment*, by willingly following *after the commandment* (Hosea v. 11), after the doctrines and commandments of men which turn from the truth.

And now I suppose my reader, if he be a man that fears God, a person of any long standing in the church of Christ, and in any measure acquainted with divine tuition, will hardly believe that the author of this discourse, who has been twenty-two years in the school of Christ, twenty-one in the ministry, and has gone through the various operations of the spirit of bondage as herein related, and who has compared notes both with the bible and with bible saints, should be counted a liar for all this, and be traduced as a misguided and misinformed man, and as one who traces things up to God and to his holy law, which can only be traced up to Satan and to the corruption of the human heart. Therefore I submit what I have written to God, and to the judgment of wisdom's children. And, if it be false, let Mr. HACKER, whom God is now making manifest, *prove me a liar in all this, and make my speech nothing worth*. If he can overthrow what I have here advanced, and prove all those things, which the Holy Ghost attributes to God, to be applicable only to Satan,

Satan, and all that the scriptures apply to the law to be only the workings of corruption, then the work is done.

But we are told, that " a believer's re-entanglement by the moral law is inconsistent with the abolition of it." Then this inconsistency is to be found in the word of God; and let them who are *wise above what is written* disprove it, or cast the blame there.

That the law is abolished and done away in Christ, the scriptures witness. 2 Cor. iii. 13. That the Galatians, who stood not fast in their liberty, but were leavened with legal leaven, were going to be entangled again with the yoke of bondage (Gal. v. 1) is scriptural also. So that this inconsistency is founded upon the very letter of scripture text. *Beware of the leaven of the pharisees*, says the Saviour. *You suffer if a man bring you into bondage*. 2 Cor. xi. 20. *False brethren were brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage*. Gal. ii. 4. *Why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the disciples' necks* (Acts xv. 10), *by compelling them to be circumcised and keep the law?* Acts xv. 5. But, if there be no such thing as a yoke of bondage to re-entangle a believer, then the apostles were in no danger by these false brethren, nor the Galatians either. But this inconsistency is not only to be found in the bible, but in the experience of God's children. LUTHER found enough of it, as appears in his comment

ment on the Galatians. And I have felt so much of it since I could call Jesus my Lord and my God, that I declare, in the presence of God, I would not go through it again for a thousand worlds. But it was God's will that I should know law from gospel, not only in my head by the scriptures, but in my heart by their different operations. Paul knew what it was to go *bound in the Spirit*, and what it was to be made *all things to all men; as under the law to them that were under the law*; and what it was to warn sinners *for three years, night and day, with tears*. And I much question if there is one child of God in this nation, twenty years old in grace, that has not felt this yoke, or at times been more or less influenced with a spirit of bondage. Thus this inconsistency is to be found in the bible, and in the experience of all the saints of God: but there is a worse inconsistency to be found in graceless professors, and that is, *promising others liberty while themselves are the servants of corruption*.

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